

## **Senior citizens with no health risks least likely to be affected by H1N1 flu**

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People aged 65 years and older with no health risks are the least likely to be affected by the H1N1 influenza virus, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. To date, 5 percent of H1N1 hospitalizations and 8 percent of deaths have occurred in this age group. In contrast, the seasonal influenza virus has resulted in 60 percent of hospitalizations and 90 percent of deaths occurring in those aged 65 and over. This difference is believed to be due to a degree of immunity that people in this age group have compiled over a lifetime, according to the CDC.

Madigan does not anticipate any shortages of either the H1N1 vaccine, said Lt. Col. (Dr.) Linda Brown, chief of the allergy/immunology clinic at Madigan.

The H1N1 vaccine will be distributed to Madigan Army Medical Center clinics based on priority, and beneficiaries will receive the H1N1 flu vaccine based on their priority category. The Department of Defense will distribute the H1N1 vaccine for all active duty, and the Washington state Department of Health will distribute the vaccine for all civilian beneficiaries. As of now, both organizations are predicting the H1N1 vaccine arriving at Madigan around November, and then H1N1 vaccination drives will be scheduled. All active duty service members are required to get the H1N1 vaccine. For civilians, a priority group list has been established to determine who will get the shot first:

1. Pregnant women
2. Persons who live with or provide care for infants aged 6 months and under (e.g., parents, siblings, daycare providers)
3. Health care and emergency medical services personnel
4. Persons aged 6 months to 24 years
5. Persons aged 25 to 64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications

Madigan officials are asking civilians who do not want to wait for Madigan's H1N1 flu vaccination drives expected to happen later this year can check within their local community, and contact their local school district for more information about getting the H1N1 vaccine for their children.

Madigan is still encouraging everyone to get vaccinated against the seasonal influenza virus. During this year's flu season, Madigan is holding a beneficiary flu drive Dec. 7 to 10, in the Madigan Medical Mall; from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The flu drive coincides with National Influenza Vaccination Week. This includes having ample flu-related supplies such as masks, hand sanitizer and antiviral medications located throughout the hospital. Madigan Army Medical Center will contribute to the mission of preserving the ability of our military men and women, civilians and contractors to provide for the national defense and to sustain current military operations worldwide by staying combat-ready. Madigan is communicating and coordinating with federal, state and local health agencies to respond to this year's flu season as necessary.

Both seasonal and H1N1 influenzas are spread primarily through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing. Contact with droplet contaminated surfaces may be another source of transmission. While both of these influenzas can make a person significantly ill, the majority of patients who contract either type do not require hospitalization. The signs and symptoms of both types are similar and can include: fever, muscle aches, headache, fatigue, nonproductive cough, sore throat, runny nose, nausea and vomiting. Also, the medical risk factors for severe infection are similar between both types of influenza. These risk factors include conditions such as lung disease, heart disease and diabetes.

Reduce your chance of contracting or spreading influenza virus by:

- Frequent hand-washing or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Practicing good cough etiquette
- Staying home if you are ill or avoiding close contact with persons who may be ill with influenza
- Use of anti-influenza medicines for persons with known or suspected influenza infection

Sources of information concerning both seasonal and H1N1 influenza include the CDC Web site at [www.cdc.gov/flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/) and [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/),

the Madigan Web site at [www.mamc.amedd.army.mil/](http://www.mamc.amedd.army.mil/), and the Madigan Influenza (Flu) Hotline, which is updated regularly with the most recent information covering both seasonal and H1N1 influenza vaccination. The Influenza Hotline can be reached at (253) 968-4744.